

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 22, 2013

SENATE BILL

No. 656

Introduced by Senator Wright

February 22, 2013

An act to amend Section 392.1 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to electricity.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 656, as amended, Wright. Electrical restructuring: information practices.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has broad regulatory authority over public utilities, including electrical corporations, as defined. Existing law restructuring the electrical industry requires the commission to authorize and facilitate direct transactions between electricity suppliers and end-use customers subject to the implementation of a nonbypassable charge, as specified. Electrical restructuring requires electric service providers, which are entities that offer electrical service to customers within the service territory of an electrical corporation but which are not electrical corporations, to register with the commission and to disclose specified information, among other things and authorizes the commission to enforce specific statutes with respect to electric service providers, but does not grant the commission jurisdiction to regulate electric service providers other than as specified.

Existing law restructuring the electrical industry requires the commission to compile and regularly update information regarding registered electric service providers, including the names and contact numbers of providers, information to assist consumers in making service choices, the number of customer complaints against specific providers

in relation to the number of customers served by those providers, and the disposition of those complaints. In this regard, existing law requires the commission to direct the Office, now Division, of Ratepayer Advocates to collect and analyze this information for purposes of preparing easily understandable informational guides or other tools to help residential and small commercial customers understand how to evaluate competing electric service options.

This bill would require the commission to compile and to update, every 6 months, the above-described information regarding registered electric service providers. The bill would delete the requirement that the commission direct the Office of Ratepayer Advocates to collect and analyze the information for purposes of making available informational guides or other tools.

~~Existing law requires the Public Utilities Commission to compile and regularly update specific consumer information regarding electrical service.~~

~~This bill would, instead, specifically require the commission to compile and update that information every 6 months.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 392.1 of the Public Utilities Code is
2 amended to read:
3 392.1. (a) The commission shall compile and update every six
4 months all of the following information: names and contact
5 numbers of registered providers, information to assist consumers
6 in making service choices, and the number of customer complaints
7 against specific providers in relation to the number of customers
8 served by those providers and the disposition of those complaints.
9 To facilitate this function, registered entities shall file with the
10 commission information describing the terms and conditions of
11 any standard service plan made available to residential and small
12 commercial customers. The commission shall adopt a standard
13 format for this filing. The commission shall maintain and make
14 generally available a list of entities offering electrical services
15 operating in California. This list shall include all registered
16 providers and those providers not required to be registered that
17 request the commission to be included in the list. The commission,

1 upon request, shall make this information available at no charge.
2 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, public agencies that
3 are registered entities shall be required to disclose their terms and
4 conditions of service contracts only to the same extent that other
5 registered entities would be required to disclose the same or similar
6 service contracts.

7 (b) The commission shall issue public alerts about companies
8 attempting to provide electric service in the state in an unauthorized
9 or fraudulent manner as defined in subdivision (b) of Section
10 394.25.

11 ~~(c) The commission shall direct the Office of Ratepayer~~
12 ~~Advocates to collect and analyze information provided pursuant~~
13 ~~to subdivision (a) for purposes of preparing easily understandable~~
14 ~~informational guides or other tools to help residential and small~~
15 ~~commercial customers understand how to evaluate competing~~
16 ~~electric service options. In implementing these provisions, the~~
17 ~~commission shall direct the Office of Ratepayer Advocates to pay~~
18 ~~special attention to ensuring that customers, especially those with~~
19 ~~limited-English-speaking ability or other disadvantages when~~
20 ~~dealing with marketers, receive correct, reliable, and easily~~
21 ~~understood information to help them make informed choices. The~~
22 ~~Office of Ratepayer Advocates shall not make specific~~
23 ~~recommendations or rank the relative attractiveness of specific~~
24 ~~service offerings of registered providers of electric services.~~